GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1734
ANSWERED ON:28.11.2001
PLIGHT OF HINDUS IN PAKISTAN
PADAMSEN CHAUDHARY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindus in Pakistan are living under the shadow of terror as reported in the Dainik Jagran dated October 24, 2001;

(b) if so, whether the matter has been taken up with the Government of Pakistan; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a)-(c) Government have seen the report appearing in the Dainik Jagran on 24th October 2001.

With the growing influence of religious extremism and obscurantism in Pakistan, including due to the active support and sponsorship given to it by the Pakistan State, minority communities living in Pakistan have been complaining of increasing insecurity and systematic discrimination. Recently there was a report of the killing of Pakistani Christians in Bahawalpur (Pakistan).

The element of discrimination against minority communities in Pakistan is built into the very structure of the Pakistan State. This is witnessed in the practice of separate electorates for minority communities, as also in the use of Pakistan`s `anti-blasphemy laws` to persecute and intimidate religious minorities in Pakistan.

Government are of the view that a constitutional and democratic framework is essential for ensuring that the rights of minority communities are protected. It is also clear that States that actively promote religious extremism and obscurantism for their own distorted purposes are incapable of ensuring the protection of minority rights.